



Prescient

CAPE WHITE BLEND
REPORT 2022

WINEMAG.CO.ZA

Beaumont

ABOUT THE WINEMAG.CO.ZA TASTING PROGRAMME 2022

Winemag.co.za is set to produce a series of category reports over the course of the year with multinational financial services company Prescient as sponsor. Each report will be based on the outcome of a blind tasting of wines entered within a specific category.

A report includes key findings, tasting notes for the top wines, buyer's guide and scores on the 100-point quality scale for all wines entered. Upon release, producers can purchase both Top 10 and regular rating stickers – consumers are encouraged to look out for these in the retail environment.

JUDGING PROCEDURES

The judging panel was chaired by me and further consisted of two trusted colleagues, namely Spencer Fondaumiere, chairman of the South African Sommelier Association and Jolette Steyn of Wine Cellar, Cape Town merchants and cellarers of fine wine. We tasted blind, labels out of sight. Ratings were done according to the 100-point system, final scores awarded on the basis of discussion that involved retasting where necessary rather than relying solely on arithmetic averaging.

Christian Eedes
Editor, Winemag.co.za

KEY FINDINGS

Cape White Blends make for an important, if niche, category. No official definition exists but our proposal is that such wines can be made from any combination of varieties as long as they include a significant Chenin Blanc component, specifically more than 15% and less than 85%- Chenin is our most planted variety by far (16 827ha in the ground at the end of 2021, this making up 18.6% of the national vineyard) and we should find ways to celebrate it.

Entries for this Prescient Report remain small – 27 wines from 26 producers were submitted this time around of which 16 (59% of the line-up) rated 90-plus on the 100-point quality scale.

Perhaps the most crucial observation to make based on this year's tasting is that these wines taken collectively make for intellectually challenging drinking. Chenin Blanc may be the one commonality, but these wines are typically

quite far removed from how straight Chenin presents, not just in terms of flavour spectrum but also structure. Very often, they bear little resemblance to any other sub-group of wines, local or international, and the result is that they can be somewhat bewildering, at least initially.

Will the Cape White Blend category ever become so well defined that the global consumer drinks them and automatically thinks of South Africa? That's a moot point but those willing to invest extra effort to engage with these wines are sure to be rewarded, however. As has been suggested before, the best examples provide novel aromas and flavours while combining both weight and drive on the palate. These wines also tend to offer good quality relative to price – the average price of this year's Top 10 is a not unreasonable R178 a bottle.

TOP 10 TASTING NOTES



Beaumont New Baby 2019

Price: R395

Total Production: 2 491 bottles and 20 magnums Abv 13.07%

30.5% Chenin Blanc, 19.5% Sauvignon Blanc, 19.5% Semillon, 19.5% Colombar and 11% Chardonnay. All varieties treated independently and then blended soon after harvest to get integration as soon as possible – spontaneously fermented and matured for 12 months in 400-litre barrels, 30% new. Complex aromatics of citrus, apple and stone fruit plus some waxy character while the palate shows excellent density matched by a good line of acidity, the finish long and savoury. Rich and broad with great texture and layers of flavour.



Meerhof Chenin Blanc Chardonnay Roussanne Grenache Blanc Verdelho Viognier 2021

Price: R155

Total Production: 3 500 bottles Abv 13%

31% Chenin Blanc, 19% Chardonnay, 12.5% Roussanne, 12.5% Grenache Blanc, 12.5% Verdelho and 12.5% Viognier. Matured for six months in 500-litre barrels, 60% new. Complex aromatics with top notes of flowers and herbs before pear, peach and citrus plus some leesy character. Intensely flavoured but not unduly heavy, the finish long and dry.



Dornier Donatus White 2018

Price: R255

Total Production: 2 753 bottles Abv 13.54%

81% Chenin Blanc and 19% Semillon. Fermented and matured for 11 months in 300- and 400-litre barrels, 25% new. A subtle waxy note before citrus and stone fruit, earth and spice on the nose while the palate has good weight and texture, the acidity nicely integrated. Layers of flavours culminating in a long, savoury finish.





Zevenwacht The Tin Mine 2021

Price: R140

Total Production: 5 820 bottles Abv 14%

37% Chenin Blanc, 34% Chardonnay, 11% Roussanne, 11% Viognier and 7% Semillon. Fermented and matured for nine months in 500-litre barrels. Some leesy complexity before citrus, peach, dried herbs and spice. The palate is full but balanced with coated acidity and a savoury finish. Rich, broad and thick textured.



Essay Chenin Blanc Roussanne Viognier 2021

Price: R95

Total Production: 33 333 bottles Abv 13.63%

72% Chenin Blanc, 17% Roussanne and 11% Viognier, the Chenin and Viognier from Agter-Paarl and the Roussanne from Stellenbosch. Fermented in stainless steel tanks. The nose shows some floral perfume and herbs before citrus and peach plus some leesy complexity. Good fruit concentration is matched by fresh acidity, the finish suitably savoury. Clean and correct.



Cavalli Cremello 2021

Price: R185

Total Production: 3 630 bottles Abv 13.5%

42% Chenin blanc, 30%, Chardonnay, 15% Verdelho and 13% Viognier. Fermented and matured for 12 months in oak, partially new except for a small portion of the Verdelho which went into concrete egg. Peach and apricot, vanilla and some leesy complexity on the nose while the palate is rich and broad with moderate acidity and a gently savoury finish.





Coterie by Wildeberg 2021

Price: R170

Total Production: 5 055 bottles Abv 13.5%

80% Chenin Blanc and 20% Grenache Blanc. Matured for nine months in older 600-litre barrels. Attractive aromatics with floral perfume preceding citrus, peach and spice while the palate is well balanced with pure fruit, zippy acidity and a savoury finish.



Retief Reserve Cape White 2020 (Van Loveren)

Price: R104

Total Production: 6 384 bottles Abv 13.83%

65% Chenin Blanc, 20% Colombar and 15% Chardonnay. Matured in older oak. Subtle notes of straw, stone fruit and spice plus some waxy character on the nose while the palate shows good depth and breadth. Flavourful with acidity that's not too obtrusive.



Roodekrantz Vineyard Selection Die Messelaar 2020

Price: R160

Total Production: 1 200 bottles Abv 13.98%

60% Chenin Blanc from a 1975 Agter-Paarl vineyard and 40% Chardonnay. Matured in older oak for 10 months. Waxy, yeasty notes precede cut apple, stone fruit and orange with the palate is rich, broad with moderate acidity and a gently savoury finish.





The Tea Leaf 2021 (Strange Kompanjie)

Price: R121

Total Production: 5 030 bottles Abv 13.5%

50% Chenin Blanc from a Paarl vineyard planted in 1977, 32% Crouchen Blanc from Franschhoek vineyard planted 1976 and 18% Grenache Gris from Paarl. Spontaneously fermented and matured for 10 months in 600-litre barrels. Complex aromatics with a top note of floral perfume before citrus, apple and peach plus some earthy, waxy notes. The palate shows good depth of fruit offset by bright acidity. Nicely weighted and packed with flavour.



BUYING GUIDE: CELLAR-DOOR PRICES FOR WINES RATED 90+

Wine	Score	Price
Meerhof Chenin Blanc Chardonnay Roussanne Grenache Blanc Verdelho Viognier 2021	94	R155
Beaumont New Baby 2019	94	R395
Zevenwacht The Tin Mine 2021	93	R140
Dornier Donatus White 2018	93	R255
Essay Chenin Blanc Roussanne Viognier 2021	92	R95
Retief Reserve Cape White 2020 (Van Loveren)	91	R104
Strange Kompanjie The Tea Leaf 2021	91	R121
Roodekrantz Vineyard Selection Die Messelaar 2020	91	R160
Coterie by Wildeberg 2021	91	R170
Cavalli Cremello 2021	91	R185
Forager White 2021	91	R90
Bonfire Hill White 2021 (The Drift)	90	R72.50
Vrede en Lust White Mischief Blend 2021	90	R105
Boplaas Gamka Branca 2020	90	R150
Bosman Family Vineyards Adama White 2021	90	R190
Muratie Laurens Campher Blended White 2020	90	R210

COMPLETE SCORES: A-Z

Name	Wine of Origin	Score
Afrikaans Vol. IV Chenin Blanc Chardonnay 2021	Stellenbosch/ Piekenierskloof	89
Babylonstoren Candide 2021	Simonsberg Paarl	89
Beaumont New Baby 2019	Bot River Walker Bay	94
Bellingham The Founder's Series Freda 2019	Cape Coast	89
Bonfire Hill White 2021 (Bruce Jack)	Breedekloof/ Swartland/ Overberg	90
Boplaas Gamka Branca Reserve 2020	Western Cape	90
Bosman Family Vineyards Adama White 2021	Wellington	90
Cavalli Cremello 2021	Stellenbosch	91
Cilmor Winemaker's Selection Cape White Blend 2021	Worcester	89
Coterie by Wildeberg 2021	Coastal Region	91
DeMorgenzon Maestro White 2019	Stellenbosch	89
Dornier Donatus White 2018	Stellenbosch	93
Essay Chenin Blanc Roussanne Viognier 2021	Coastal Region	92
Forager White 2021	Western Cape	91
Leeuwenkuil Reserve White 2019	Swartland	89
Meerhof Chenin Blanc Chardonnay Roussanne Grenache Blanc Verdelho Viognier 2021	Swartland	94
Muratie Laurens Campher Blended White 2020	Stellenbosch	90
Noble Hill Estate Reserve 2020	Simonsberg- Paarl	88
Perdeberg The Dry Land Collection Rossouw's Heritage 2019	Western Cape	89
Retief Reserve Cape White 2020 (Van Loveren)	Robertson	91
Roodekrantz Vineyard Selection Die Messelaar 2020	Coastal Region	91
Spier The Yellowwood Organic White 2021	Coastal Region	89
The Fledge & Co. Vagabond 2019	Western Cape	89
The Tea Leaf 2021 (Strange Kompanjie)	Western Cape	91
Vrede en Lust White Mischief Blend 2021	Elgin	90
White Leipzig 2021 (Leipzig)	Western Cape	89
Zevenwacht The Tin Mine 2021	Stellenbosch	93

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CAVALLI



ZEVENWACHT



BEAUMONT



WILDEBERG